

WILLINGTON QUAY

Urban District Council.



REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE YEAR 1896.



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TO THE

Willington Quay Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Report for the year ended December 31st, 1896.

MORTALITY.

General Mortality. During the whole of the year 132 deaths (69 males, 63 females) were registered.

Estimating the population at 8,050, this gives a death-rate of 16·4 per 1,000. The following table compares the death-rates for the last ten years with those of the large English town districts.

Annual Death-rates per 1,000 from all cases during the years, 1887—1896.

	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	Mean of 10 years. 1887-96
Willington Quay.	11·8	19·1	17·6	18·6	18·1	16·0	11·7	13·6	18·6	16·4	16·1
Large English Town Districts.	18·9	18·4	18·7	19·5	21·0	18·8	19·1	16·0	18·8	17·2	18·6

The death-rate for 1896 is a moderate one, being 0·8 below the average of the large English town districts.

At the end of this report will be found a tabulated form in which the deaths are classified according to ages and diseases.

Mortality among Children. Fifty-eight deaths occurred in children under 5 years, this being equal to a percentage of 43·9; in the preceding year the number was 77, or a percentage of 52·1.

Infant mortality, measured by the proportion of deaths under 1 year to births registered, was equal to 150 per 1,000, as against 170 for the preceding year, and 161 for the large English town districts. Taking the mean for the last 10 years, we get a rate of 137; this means that, on an average, of every 100 children born in this district, 13 die before they are 1 year old.

Mortality above 65 years. Sixteen deaths occurred above 65 years, being 12·1 per cent. of the whole number.

Mortality from Seven Principal Zymotic Diseases. These diseases which include: Small-pox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping-Cough, Fevers and Diarrhœa, have caused 16 deaths, or 12·1 per cent., the number in the preceding year being 18, percentage 12·2.

The Zymotic death-rate for this year, therefore, is 1·98, as against 2·26 for the preceding year, 1·03 for the year 1894, the rate for the 67 large English town districts being 2·51. Scarlet Fever caused 11 deaths; Whooping-Cough, 2; Measles, Diarrhœa, and Typhoid Fever each one.

The Zymotic rate, as will be seen, is 0·53 below that of the large English town districts,

Annual Death-rates per 1,000 from several Zymotic Diseases during the year 1896.

	Meas-les.	Scarlet Fever	Diph-theria	Whoop-ing Cough.	Fevers	Diarr-hœa.	General Zymotic Rate 1896	Mean of 10 years 1887-96.
Willington Quay.	0·12	1·36.	0·00	0·25	0·12	0·12	1·93	1·51
Large English Town Districts.	0·64	0·19	0·25	0·43	0·20	0·68	2·51	2·17

Mortality from other causes. Disease of the Respiratory Organs including Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy, caused 19 deaths ; Phthisis, 6 ; Heart Diseases, 10 ; Injuries, 8.

Summary of Mortality Percentages.

Zymotic Diseases	12·1 per cent.	Under 1 year	27·3 per cent.
Phthisis	4·5 „	1 and under 5 years	16·6 „
Respiratory Diseases	14·3 „	5 „ 15 „	8·3 „
Heart Diseases	7·6 „	15 „ 25 „	3·8 „
Injuries	7·6 „	25 „ 65 „	31·8 „
All other Diseases	53·8 „	Above 65 years	12·1 „

Mortality classified according to Localities.

Tyne View Terrace	1	Church Street	6	Western Road	4
Brunton Street	6	Stephenson Street	15	Mill Cottages	1
Chapel Street	5	Palmer's Terrace	5	Argyle Street	1
Dock Street	1	Carlyle Street	4	Rosehill Road	2
Main Street	2	Boundary Street	3	St. Mary's Ter.	1
Wagon Stairs	1	Potter Street	8	Ravensworth Street	7
Norman Terrace	1	Nelson Street	14	Keelman's Row	4
Gladstone Street	1	Philipson Street	1	River Tyne	6
George Street	13	Hodgson Street	6	Willington Gut	2
Bewicke Street	5	Headlam Street	3	Infectious Hospital	3

BIRTHS.

The births for the year number 240 (123 males, 117 females), equal to a birth-rate of 29·8 per 1000, as against 35·4 for the preceding year and 30·1 for the 67 large English town districts. The gain to the population (*i.e.*, the excess of births over deaths) of the district is, therefore, 109.

NEW CASES OF SICKNESS.

Small-pox. I am glad to say that since June 1883, no cases of this disease have occurred.

Measles. This disease was slightly prevalent in May and June. In October and November a good many cases occurred in Norman Terrace, George Street, Bewicke Street, and Palmer's Terrace, but in December very few cases came to my knowledge.

Scarlet Fever. I am sorry to say that Scarlet Fever has been prevalent during the whole of the year. Only a few cases occurred during the first 4 months ; in May, however, the disease spread considerably and in a very few weeks attained the dimensions of a slight epidemic, which continued with varying intensity during the months of June, July, and August. It then gradually declined until the end of the year, the disease in December having almost disappeared.

One hundred cases were notified during the whole of the year, the numbers in each month being as follows :

January 2, February 1, March 2, April 7, May 26, June 15, July 5.
August 17, September 8, October 4, November 9, December 2.

Forty-four cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, being 44 per cent. of the whole number, of the 56 cases which were treated at their own homes, 8 died (14·3 per cent.), whilst of the 44 treated at the Hospital only three terminated fatally (6·8 per cent).

Judging by these figures I think I may safely say that if none of these cases had been sent to the Hospital, in all probability, several more lives would have been lost, indeed statistics from various Isolation Hospitals in the country shew that the death-rate from Scarlet Fever in these institutions is generally low, and I consider that I am not wrong in stating that this district has not only benefited directly by the Hospital, through the saving of several lives, in cases that have actually occurred, but indirectly also, through the fact that 44 centres of infection were removed from some of the most crowded parts of the district. I am certain that, but for the Hospital, the epidemic, instead of being limited to a hundred cases, would have extended to twice or three times that number, with, of course, a proportionate increase in the number of deaths, especially as during the month of May fresh infection was brought from two different sources outside the district.

With regard to the cases, which were treated at their own homes, I regret to say, that, notwithstanding the pains taken by the Inspector and myself to give practical advice on this subject, a good deal of

carelessness and ignorance was displayed in the treatment of the disease by the parents of the children affected, especially with reference to isolation. Most people seem to be under the impression that if they keep the patient in one room, suspend a sheet over the door and use disinfectants that nothing more is necessary. Great surprise is then expressed when it is found that child after child takes ill, the disease evidently being transmitted from one child to another. The reason of course is not far to seek ; the infection in these cases is carried by means of the clothing of the nurse, and any one with common sense must see that isolation cannot be effectually carried out, unless means be taken by the nurse, when she leaves the patient, to carry as little infection with her as possible, and this she cannot do without divesting herself of her outer garment, (which of necessity must be covered with disease germs), and leaving it behind in the sick room. An overall to cover the ordinary dress completely, can be made of very inexpensive materials, and the little trouble and outlay incurred is amply repaid by the results. Care must, of course, be taken to use separate plates, cups, spoons, etc , for the patient, and to thoroughly wash these in disinfectant solution every time they are taken out of the sick room. I am certain that in many cases which came under my observation, in houses where isolation was supposed to have been carried out, the disease attacked several children in succession, simply owing to the neglect of these necessary precautionary measures.

Typhoid Fever. Five cases were notified in January. Three occurred in one family occupying one room in Chapel Street, they were removed to the Hospital, the room and clothing were disinfected and the bedding destroyed. One case occurred in Potter Street, the disease probably having been caused by the sewer in the back street being blocked up. Another case, which was removed to the Hospital occurred in Stephenson Street, in a house, the rooms of which were very small and badly ventilated but without any other serious defect.

Two cases were notified in February, one in Potter Street, probably due to the same defect in the sewer, the other in Ravensworth Street, the latter case was sent to the Hospital.

In March another case was reported in Potter Street, attributable possibly to the same cause as that mentioned in connection with the other two cases, which occurred in the same locality in January and February.

In August a case, which terminated fatally, occurred in the New Buildings in Chapel Street, we found here an open ashpit, which was frequently complained of as a nuisance owing to the accumulation of water, and consequent foul smell. A notice was sent to the owner to cover in the ashpit or substitute ash-closets.

Whooping-cough. A good many cases came to my knowledge, two deaths having been caused by this disease,

Diphtheria. Three cases were notified one in April in Potter Street, one in September in Palmer's Terrace, one in October in Main Street. Sanitary defects were discovered in two instances and notices were served upon the owners of the dwellings to remedy these.

Diarrhœa. Diarrhœa was prevalent during the Autumn months but to a less extent than usual, only one death being caused by it.

Influenza. A few cases came to my knowledge in the Spring and Autumn, but no cases terminated fatally.

SANITARY WORK.

Scavenging. The ashpits and ash-closets have been attended to in a fairly satisfactory manner. I have, however, several times received complaints with regard to the nuisance caused by night soil being allowed occasionally to lie in the back streets for a considerable length of time. In the case of large ashpits, which I am glad to say are decreasing in number every year, a certain amount of nuisance is unavoidable, but in the case of the small ash-closets, the contents of the receptacles can and ought to be lifted straight into the carts, without in any way soiling the back street, otherwise one of the great advantages of the small ash-closets over the old ashpits will be lost.

The men, whose duty it is to cleanse the ash-closets, should arrange to work together in a proper systematic manner so as to insure that the cartmen are always in immediate attendance upon the scavengers. If this were done and a more liberal use of disinfectants made, all complaints on this score would cease.

I have also to complain of the state of some of the Stairs, which, on many occasions, I have found in a dirty condition. I am alluding especially to those stairs in the older portions of the district, which have high walls on each side and where the circulation of the air is limited, it is important that these should be cleansed regularly and that no accumulation of filth be allowed in the corners of the steps; it would also be advisable to have the walls limewashed at regular periods.

Inspections and Nuisances. The Sanitary Inspector and I have made several house-to-house inspections during the course of the year. Numerous notices have been sent to the owners of property to abate nuisances and to repair defective dwellings.

I regret to say that, although some improvements have been made since last year, there are still a great many houses in a more or less insanitary condition.

The old houses in Chapel Street, Brunton Street, Main Street and Dock Street, comprising the old Howdon District, are practically in the same condition as when I reported on them last year. Repairs have been done to the George Inn, a few ashpits have been converted into ash-closets. the Brewery Cottages have been closed, but, in other respects very little has been done to improve the condition of this portion of the district.

Amongst the most insanitary of these places I may mention the old Globe Property. This is a block of tenements, all, more or less, in a dilapidated state, most of the walls are damp, the ceilings and partitions defective, the back-stairs which are below the level of the front street, nearly absolutely without light, damp and unwholesome, the yard not properly paved and consequently always in a dirty condition. A

notice was served upon the owners to thoroughly repair the premises, but at the end of the year nothing had been done. In connection with this property I may state it as my opinion that it will not only be advisable, but before long absolutely necessary, to raise the whole of back Dock Street to the level of Main Street and Tyne View Terrace. This would do away with a great many of the insanitary conditions and I trust that the Council will be able to make arrangements with the owners to have this very necessary improvement carried out at a not very distant date.

In Church Street the Dock Inn on inspection, was found to be unfit for habitation owing to the dampness of the walls of the upstairs rooms; the owner was served with a notice, and a new roof was put on.

Stephenson Street is with great difficulty kept in a sanitary condition owing to the fact, as I have mentioned several times before, that the houses on the North side are built close to the Ballast Hill, and that, consequently, the yards are small, confined and badly ventilated. The only way to improve the condition of this part of the street would be to build a high retaining wall at a sufficient distance behind the houses.

With regard to Palmer's Terrace, I have merely to repeat what I said in last year's report that "on account of the small size of the yards in the row of houses on the South side between the Alma steps and the Ballast Hill and the impossibility of enlarging these without encroaching upon the street, the adoption of water-closets is the only plan which holds out any prospect of getting rid of the present unhealthy conditions"

In Nelson Street and Potter Street a good many ashpits have been converted into ash-closets, and several yards have been cemented; in Hodgson Street on the East side pail closets have been adopted in six of the yards.

At the end of the year a notice was served upon the Gas Company to close the manager's house (in Gas Lane) as unfit for habitation. We found on inspection that the floors were always in a damp con-

dition, the cause being partly some fault in the foundations, partly the low position of the house (being below the level of the street). The owners have agreed to build a new house on the opposite side of the street, for the manager. and to convert the present one into a store-house.

In Western Road a good deal of nuisance is caused by a number of open ashpits on the North side ; the yards are very low and the ash-pits consequently difficult to clean out ; ash-closets raised to the height of the back street should be substituted.

In Keelman's Row a great improvement could be effected by the removal of the ash-closets and slop-sinks from their present site to the rear of the premises. This would not only vastly improve the appearance of the street, but would also prove a great boon from a sanitary point of view as it would in a great measure prevent the nuisance caused by the careless method of disposal of slopwater and ashes, at present existing among the tenants of these houses. Of course, it would be possible by strict supervision and a few Police Court proceedings to stop the people from throwing slopwater on the street (as is frequently done) but this would not do away with the fact that the street gullies under the present conditions, have to be used as slop-sinks and that however careful the people may be, a continual soakage of filth round the gullies must necessarily take place. Such a state of affairs in a *main thoroughfare* ought not to be tolerated, and I am certain that if the Council could devise a scheme, which would enable them to carry out my suggestions, so as to get rid of all these unsightly closets and insanitary slop-sinks, they would earn the gratitude of the ratepayers.

The block of old houses at the top of Ravensworth Street has again been a source of trouble, owing to the dampness of the walls ; the owner after receiving a notice, repaired the roof, but as this is an old tiled one, I am afraid, the benefit obtained will only be temporary.

The Cowsheds, Dairies, Milkshops, and Slaughter Houses, have all been inspected regularly, and were found in a fairly good condition.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

C. T. U. BABST.

APPENDIX.

During the Year 1896, in the Wellington Quay Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined Ages.								Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age.																							
	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	h.	i.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	
		At all Ages.	Under 1 year;	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.																								
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(B) Table of Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness

Coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1896, in the Willington Quay Urban Sanitary District; classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

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Notification of Infectious Disease has been compulsory in the District since 1890.

Isolation Hospital (Wallsend and Willington Quay Joint Hospital) used by the sick of this District is situated at Wallsend.